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To the Feeling Heart,

Exalted Affection;

OR,

SOPHIA PRINGLE.

A POEM.

By the Rev. W. COLE,

Author of *A Key to the Pſalms.*

SALISBURY:

Printed by R. WILKS, in the MARKET-PLACE,

MDCCLXXXIX.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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a unfortunate

SOPHIA PRINGLE, a ~~beautiful~~ young woman, was impoſed and prevailed upon (by the inſidious arts of the villain who firſt ſeduced her from the paths of innocence and virtue) to commit an act of FORGERY; *for which ſhe ſuffered execution in London, a year or two ago.*

'If (ſaid the poor unfortunate, upon being offered a free pardon, *on the condition* that ſhe impeached her accomplice—her lover) *'if I 'cannot reconcile myſelf to the ſhame and miſery 'of my* own *death, how can I be the cauſe of* his, *'whoſe life is far dearer to me than my own?'— This laſt ſpeech gave riſe to the following Poem.*

BROAD-CHALK, *Wilts.* W. C.

EXALTED AFFECTION;

OR,

SOPHIA PRINGLE.

MARK! how the jocund courier of day,
Tiptoes * yon hill, and smiles dull night away;
Now Babel-hums distract the passing ear,
And glowing action pants in hope's career:
All chace the † venal butterfly in view,
Mock'd at each grasp, yet constant to pursue:

* ——— 'Jocund day
'Stands *tiptoe* on the misty mountain's top.'

ROMEO *and* JULIET.

† Riches or happiness.

All free, all chearful, buſtle care away,
Farm * the young dawn, and bleſs the gracious day;
All, but the loſt SOPHIA!------

ALAS! *ſhe* free! when rude vindictive chains
Have preſs'd down ſenſe, and numb'd her purple veins!

Can ſhe be cheerful, while deſpotic woe
Corrodes her heart, and triumphs o'er her brow?
But yet, *if innocent*, where's then the ſcroll,
Th' indented proof, that ſtamps the venal ſoul?
Shine not, thou prodigal of glorious light,
She hates thoſe beams, and *cannot* bleſs thy ſight:
She courts thick darkneſs,--there pours forth her moan,
There feaſts on ſelfiſh miſery alone;
Carouſes deep affliction's bitter cup,
And to the very dregs will drink it up.

* Turn it to early intereſt and advantage.

But come, thou philanthropic * Hero, come,
Take now the † gauge of misery *at home:*
Enter with me the dark, dank, dreary cell,
Where pale contrition counts the midnight bell,
Or ‡ vice imprison'd blasts out rage and sin,
While § vulture guilt feeds foul on pangs within!

On farther, farther yet,—see there, see there,
(Ah! softly tread) and venerate the tear:
Sacred ‖ *is misery!* with eyes on heav'n,
She burns in grief, and bleeds to be forgiv'n.
One ¶ guiltless hand supports her faded cheek,
Or props the bursting heart, ere yet it break.

* Howard.

† 'He took the gauge and dimension of misery.'

Vide Burke's Speech.

‡ For a prison reforms or hardens a criminal.

§ An allusion to the story of Tityus or Prometheus.

‖ A sent from heaven for our chastisement.

¶ Her attitude.

The guilty * *forger* upward *ſpreads* its pray'r,
Points to the throne of grace, and pleads for
mercy there:
And mercy thou *ſhalt* find----let harpy-law
Engroſs revenge, and glut its ſavage maw,
Still will the cherub Pity, from above,
Pour o'er thy wounds the oil of ſacred love;
And, free-commiſſion'd from the KING of KINGS,
Deſcend with † vivid healing on her wings:
The cordial drop he will at laſt beſtow,
Who ‡ waſhes ſcarlet ſin as white as ſnow.

BUT, ‖ hark! a ſtill ſmall voice arreſts mine
ear;
Tho' ſmall, it pierces; and, tho' ſtill, 'tis clear:

* The right-hand.

† "The Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with healing on his wings." MALACHI, chapt. iv. verſe 2.

‡ *Vide* PSALM li.

‖ Having introduced her to the ſight, the poet introduces her as ſpeaking.

Ah!

Ah! loſt SOPHIA! ſad, repentant fair!
In vain! ſtern Juſtice *frowns* away thy pray'r,
Whither that ſtep,——to whom this frantic
ſtrain?
On what, on what intent thy heated brain?
'Tis vain, to bow the heart, or bend the knee,
Claſping the duſt in ſov'reign miſery!
Yet, the firſt *Man* Death ſentenc'd, did not die,
Who, ſpurning juſtice, *pre'd* the pregnant lie;
On him new life did royal mercy beam,
Shov'd * by the law, nor preſs'd its fierce extreme;
Let the firſt *Female forger* then go free,
As firſt,---ah! then, SOPHIA, why not thee?
No,!--the black word's irrevocable doom,
Seals thee for ſhame, and antedates thy tomb;
Yet, yet, thy laſt † weak effort of deſpair,
Pleads a fond mother's embryotic care:

* Offence's gilded hand may ſhove by juſtice.
HAMLET.

† She pleaded a maternal concern.

In vain!-----no * heav'n-born olive-branch will lend
Its † tranſient aid, or infant twig extend
O'er mis'ry's torrent, help diſtreſs beneath,
And for a while ſuſpend SOPHIA's death.
Ah, no! ‡ the matron-verdict ſtands confeſt,
Denies the weak pretence, and---weeps---the reſt
And yet thou prayeſt!----

'O THOU! the life-blood of my hopes above!
'FATHER of all! and GOD of ſacred love!
§ . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
(For Thou know'ſt all things) hear my dread appeal,
'Before in pangs I bleed my laſt farewell!

* 'Children like olive branches,' &c. PSALM cxxviii.

† It could ſave her but a ſhort time.

‡ The jury allowed not her plea.

§ ------'Expreſſive ſilence.' THOMSON.

'Does

'Does true contrition ſhed *th' unfeigned tear*;
'This ſcalds my *very heart*,---this is ſincere:
'Does the thick ſigh e'er waft a vow to heav'n,
'May this aſcend,---Oh! be my guilt forgiv'n!
'Quicken'd by hope immortal,---dead to ſin,---
'My pray'r accepted,---grace new-born within:
'I bleſs my GOD for this laſt * *beſt* releaſe,
'Oh! let thy ſervant now depart in peace;
'My forfeit-life moſt humbly firm reſign,
'Kiſs the law's rod, but, ah! my ſoul be thine:
'In Thee I've dar'd to hope,---to Thee I'll die,
'Then live---and praiſe Thee to eternity!
'Angelic choirs!—but hark! the fatal bell
Thunders freſh horror thro' SOPHIA's cell—
'Yes, yes, thou death-tongu'd ſummoner, I come,
'Chide thy ſlow grace, and pant-but-for my tomb:
'I come prepar'd to bluſh in public day,
'Then yield the legal blood-hounds all their prey.

* From her ſins.

'Hark!

'Hark! do I hear—"*Reprieve!*" what then?—
for *me!*—
'Yet, hark! again——ah! no, it cannot be;—
'Deluſive all—no, 'tis, 'tis mercy's voice
'Cheers lifeleſs hope, and bids deſpair rejoice;
'Free pardon's *fiat* hails my drear abode,
'And human pity *bows* to that of GOD.'
(Mark! how ſhe graſps, and mad with ſudden bliſs,
Unſeals the *mandate* with a burning kiſs!
Ah! read it not SOPHIA;—look not there;
'Twill mock thy hopes, 'twill aggravate deſpair)
'Curs'd* be ſuch terms (ſhe raves) my ſoul diſdains
'The coward *ſelfiſh* contract, tho' in chains.
'Will royal mercy ſmile *inſidious* peace,
'Is pardon full, equivocal releaſe?
'Impeach? but whom? that idol of my youth,
'Worſhip'd with maiden vows, and veſtal truth?

* Having read it and the conditions.

'No!

'No! rather let * inquiſitorial pains
'Burſt with fierce agony my reeking veins;
'Vex from their ſockets theſe faint lamps of day:
'SOPHIA *loves*, and *love* ſhall ne'er betray.
'Since I muſt periſh, let me † ſink alone,
'Thus ſave his life, "far ‡ dearer than my own:"
'I'll ſmile in death then, ſince I die for thee,
'Thou firſt dear cauſe of all my miſery!
'Live thou—but pity poor SOPHIA's doom;—
'Live my heart's lord, but—weep it o'er my tomb!
'Farewell!—Farewell!—I go—I burn to prove
'(My pardon ſeal'd, my hope ſecur'd above)
'Undaunted truth, and moſt EXALTED LOVE.

* Tortures of the inquiſition.

† The platform ſinks mechanically.

‡ Her very words.

'AND yet—once * more, farewell!—'tis hard
to part;—
'Tis hard to leave him, who *ſtill* cheers my
heart:
'Bleſs him, my GOD!—may he'——no more—
no more,
Death—Death himſelf, unbolts the priſon-door;
Marſhals his † ruffians at this gate of hell,
Cuts ſhort delay, and tolls the warrant-bell.

AT that dread inſtant, (hark!) ‡ confuſion's
prey'r,
Yells out the frantic language of deſpair;
While the rough creaking craſh of jarring chains,
Clangs horrid prelude to *ſeverer* pains!

* Here, in ſpite of her courage, humanity recoils at the thoughts of loſing him for *ever*.

† Attendants on the execution, officers, &c.

‡ The convicts hear the laſt fatal ſound, and give an univerſal ſhriek.

At

At laſt the criminals indeed appear,
Shadows of men, and images of fear.
Parch'd * are their tongues—they ſpeak not as they go,
But down-caſt ſilence loud proclaims their woe;
They cannot lift an eye, as, heaving painful breath,
By ſad, ſhort, weary ſteps, they crawl the path to death! †

Now expectation knits each anxious brow,
'Till loud laments burſt forth the mighty woe!
SOPHIA comes! oh! raiſe her ‡ trembling form,
Oh! cheer that heart, with life-blood ſcarce warm.

* A deſcription of wretches on their way to execution.—
Is poſſible not to feel for them?

† 'The line too labours, and the words move ſlow.'

‡ She was entirely emaciated, and half-dead.

She comes, like victim lamb, in bonds confin'd,
Patient in meekneſs, and to *all* reſign'd!
With labour heaves the ſupplicating eye,
It ſinks again, unnerv'd by miſery!
She fain would ſpeak,—but, ah! her flutt'ring breath
Stops in half-ſounds, or weakly murmurs 'death!'

On, on, for pity's ſake, oh! ſpeed releaſe,
Ye tardy miniſters, and give her peace:——
The blood-ſtain'd * platform *ſprings* to public view,
And rattling cords complete the horrid ſhew!
Heave up the † *languid corpſe*,—quick bare the neck,
Adjuſt the nooſe—and wait the fatal beck.——
Oh! dread ſuſpence!——At once, the diſmal bell

* Even human blood!

† She was all but dead, and had fainted away.

Tolls

Tolls the dead *fiat*, and cuts short *Farewell!*
The platform ſinks,—the ſhudd'ring crowd retires,——
SOPHIA feebly ſtruggles,—and expires!

ADIEU, poor maid! and be for ever bleſt,
In the glad manſions of eternal reſt!
Welcom'd above each pray'r, and ev'ry ſin forgiv'n;
Thy * ſhame be bury'd here, thy praiſe aſcend to heav'n.

* 'Take thy praiſe with thee to heav'n;
Thine ignominy ſleep with thee in the grave.'
HENRY IV.

MORAL.

MORAL.

MARK *well the tale, thence dread example take;*
Reflect, and weep for poor SOPHIA's *ſake:*
Yet act thoſe tears a mean, a mimic *part,*
Which grace the cheek, but not amend the heart.—
'Tis perſevering innocence alone,
'Tis • *wedded love, that makes ſweet peace your own.*
Law, mildy ſtern, and yet ſeverely wiſe,
Spares a mean culprit, but a forger DIES.

18 JA 53.

• She was not married.

FINIS.